

One special technical feature that unifies the subject matter of the claims is the hematopoiesis stimulatory activity of Bv8, EG-VEGF, or a combination thereof. Applicant teaches that Bv8, EG-VEGF, or a combination thereof induces proliferation of hematopoietic stem cells, myeloid progenitor cells, and lymphoid progenitor cells, which directly increases the production of myeloid cells and lymphoid cells including granulocytes, monocytes, B cells, and T cells. By disclosing this specific activity of Bv8 and EG-VEGF, Applicants teach the range of Bv8 and EG-VEGF polypeptides, agonists, and antagonists that can be used to induce or inhibit the hematopoiesis stimulatory activity of Bv8, EG-VEGF, or a combination thereof. Applicants also teach that immunodeficiency disorders, such as lymphopenias, neutropenia, monocytopenias, and granulocytopenias, can be treated by stimulating the hematopoiesis stimulatory activity of Bv8, EG-VEGF, or a combination thereof, and that autoimmune disorders or disorders associated with abnormal hematopoiesis, such as leukemia, can be treated by inhibiting the hematopoiesis stimulatory activity of Bv8, EG-VEGF, or a combination thereof.

Applicants therefore submit the hematopoiesis stimulatory activity of Bv8, EG-VEGF, or a combination thereof discussed above is one special technical feature of the claims that links Groups I and II so as to form a single inventive concept. The Office Action has not provided any evidence that supports lack of unity of invention or demonstrates that the claims are not linked by a special technical feature.

Conclusion

In view of the forgoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request consolidation of Groups I and II into a single group. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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